

STATEMENT OF DEB HAALAND
SECRETARY
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON
INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Chair Pingree, Ranking Member Joyce and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the Interior Department's Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Request.

It is an honor and privilege for me to be here with you today. When I testified before this Committee last year I had only been confirmed for a month. Now that I have had the opportunity to spend a year at Interior it is even more of an honor to represent the Department and our over seventy thousand dedicated professionals. Every day, in every corner of the country, our workforce shows up with a singular focus on achieving results. They work with States, Tribal Nations, and other partners to conserve and steward the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage for the benefit, use, and enjoyment of the American people. Interior's programs are helping to generate jobs, grow the economy, and build resilience to the challenges of our changing climate.

I have also enjoyed working with the Members of this Subcommittee this year. I have had the honor to visit many of you in your districts and to meet the great people you represent. I look forward to continuing Interior's long tradition of working together with the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee to accomplish great things for the American people. This Subcommittee plays a vital role in the success of the Department of the Interior (DOI) and I look forward to our continued collaboration.

Overview of Interior's Budget

Interior's budget request totals \$18.1 billion in current authority, of which \$16.6 billion is within the jurisdiction of this Subcommittee. The total budget request is an increase of \$1.9 billion, or 12 percent, from the 2022 enacted appropriation. This request includes an increase of \$269.0 million to cover fixed-cost increases, such as rent and Federal salary adjustments, needed to maintain staffing and core operations for the bureaus and offices funded through the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriation. An additional \$340.0 million is accessible through the budget cap adjustment for wildfire suppression to ensure funds are available in the event the annual appropriation is inadequate to meet suppression needs.

The 2023 President's Budget request complements the landmark 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) investments we are now implementing. This once in a lifetime investment provides the significant down payment needed to address longstanding health and safety risks from abandoned coal mines and oil and gas infrastructure across the country. These investments are

increasing the resilience of critical ecosystems, Tribal Nations, and communities to meet the challenges of critical drought and threats of wildland fires, which pose unprecedented risks across the country.

The 2023 President's Budget for Interior complements this investment and maintains the Administration's commitments to deliver jobs and economic growth, build up America's resilience to climate change, advance a transition to clean energy, strengthen the Nation-to-Nation relationship with Tribal Nations, and expand work with partners to conserve lands and increase access to outdoor recreation. Overarching these, the 2023 budget continues to reflect the importance of science, diversity and inclusion, and the goal to leverage the power of collaboration to support Interior's important missions.

The 2023 President's Budget proposes allocations for important mandatory funding investments available through the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA), including \$1.6 billion for deferred maintenance projects through the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund (LRF) in the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), National Park Service (NPS), and the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE). The 2023 budget allocates \$681.9 million in mandatory funding for Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) programs, which includes \$294.8 million for voluntary land acquisition projects.

The 2023 budget proposes important legislative and technical adjustments to secure mandatory funding for important funding for Tribal Nations. In addition, the Administration supports funding the renewal of our Compacts of Free Association (COFA) relationships with the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and the Republic of Palau. Financial assistance under the COFA is scheduled to end after 2023 for the FSM and the RMI and in 2024 for Palau. The Administration will request necessary mandatory funding to be appropriated to the Department of State, with language calling for continued implementation by the Department of the Interior. The United States remains committed to its longstanding partnerships with the governments and the people of the Freely Associated States as we work together to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Strengthening Tribal Nations

It is deeply meaningful for me to speak on behalf of the Administration's 2023 budget for the Department of the Interior which includes an unprecedented total of \$4.5 billion for Indian Affairs programs. This is an increase of \$880 million from the recently enacted 2022 appropriation and the request prioritizes Tribal sovereignty, strong Tribal communities, and advances equity and opportunity for all American Indians and Alaska Natives.

The 2023 request reflects the input of Tribal Nations through the Tribal Interior Budget Council as well as the government-wide Tribal consultation on the President's FY 2023 Budget held by the Administration last September. The budget expands many core programs and goes further to address outstanding gaps to improve environmental quality and ensure Tribal communities are part of the national priorities to address climate change and move toward clean energy. The 2023 President's Budget also expands the inclusion of Tribes in proposed investments across other Federal agencies and across Interior.

The 2023 budget request for Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) programs totals \$2.8 billion, an increase of \$583.4 million from the 2022 enacted appropriation. The BIA budget features investments to address the most critical needs in Indian Country, foremost among these is

upholding the Federal trust relationship with Tribal Nations and strengthening the government-to-government relationship. Within this request is \$464.5 million to cover the estimated 2023 requirements for Contract Support Costs and 105(l) Tribal lease requirements which the Administration proposes to reclassify as mandatory funding in 2023. This proposal honors the Administration’s commitment to ensure continued full funding to support Tribal operating costs associated with the self-determination and self-governance of Federal programs. I look forward to working with Congress to secure this mandatory funding for Tribal Nations.

The budget also proposes legislation to complement the \$2.5 billion investment in the BIL which will accelerate completion of enacted Indian Water Rights Settlements. This mandatory investment is reflected in the 2023 request for BIA Indian Land and Water Rights Claims. Additionally, the 2023 budget proposes \$340.0 million in mandatory funding over 10 years to support the operations, maintenance, and repairs associated with enacted Bureau of Reclamation Indian Water Rights Settlements. The Administration is also interested in working with Congress on an approach to provide a mandatory funding source for future settlements.

Investing in Tribal Communities

The 2023 budget for BIA features an investment of \$44.7 million to strengthen Tribal communities by expanding the Tiwahe Initiative to provide more opportunity for Tribes to manage and integrate programs which impact their communities. Under Tiwahe, a portion of the funding assists Tribes at selected sites to implement a Tribal driven approach to deliver services more effective and efficiently. Tiwahe facilitates collaboration within Tribal communities—which can help to leverage resources, share expertise, reduce duplication, and exchange information about families’ needs—to formulate the most responsive approaches to provide services. Since 2015, the Tiwahe Initiative has focused primarily on promoting family stability through several Human Services programs. The Department’s 2023 budget expands Tiwahe in Social Services, the Indian Child Welfare Act, and establishes new programs in Tribal Justice Support, and Economic Development programs.

The new Tiwahe program in Tribal Justice Support will assist Tribes as they work to strengthen Tribal justice practices and protocols to meet the child, youth, or adult needs within their communities. The new program features support for Tribal Healing and Wellness Courts as alternatives to incarceration. The Tiwahe program in Economic Development will support Tribal development of unique solutions tailored to their communities to create economic opportunity. Including an economic development component of Tiwahe was a priority request from the Tribal Interior Budget Council for the 2023 budget.

The 2023 budget includes \$562.1 million for Public Safety and Justice programs and \$70.3 million for Public Safety Construction, for a total of \$632.4 million to address these needs. The combined increase is \$38.3 million above the 2022 enacted appropriation. The 2023 request includes \$282.4 million for boots-on-the-ground police services, \$127.0 million for the operation of Detention and Corrections programs, and \$52.7 million to support Tribal Courts. This funding includes \$32.0 million to address increased requirements of Tribes impacted by the McGirt Decision, and \$10.0 million to equip BIA funded law enforcement officers with body-worn cameras as part of a DOI-wide effort. The 2023 budget includes \$16.5 million to address the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous People.

BIA’s budget includes additional investments in Tribal communities in areas such as Tribal climate resilience, clean energy, road maintenance, environmental quality projects, Tribal

broadband grants, and funding to raise the minimum Small Tribe Supplement payment for existing eligible Tribes in this program. The budget also proposes key investments to strengthen Tribal sovereignty of their homelands with \$14.8 million for the acquisition of new Tribal lands and \$80 million for Indian land consolidation to address the ongoing fractionation on Indian lands. These investments are paired with proposed language to clarify Federal recognition requirements for land into Trust cases in light of the *Carcieri v. Salazar*.

The 2023 budget request includes \$7.0 million to continue the progress made with the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative launched in June 2021. Interior is uniquely positioned to assist in the effort to recover this history. Interior has focused initial efforts of the initiative on Tribal outreach, collection and review of Department documents and records, and compilation of existing data in the Department's jurisdiction. Funding in 2023 will support additional outreach, research, and documentation to locate potential gravesites at former school locations and to help ensure the remains of those who are found are identified and protected. Additional resources are included in the budget to increase funding for Native language grants, which are essential to revitalizing this critical component of Native culture.

Advancing Indian Education

The 2023 budget includes \$1.6 billion for Indian Education programs, an increase of \$294 million above the 2022 enacted level. Native students face stark inequities in access to education, many of which were highlighted and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. To help address this gap, the budget invests a total of \$891.5 million, an increase of \$98.3 million above the 2022 enacted level for BIE-funded elementary and secondary school programs. This includes \$500.6 million for the Indian Student Equalization Program formula funds, which provide the primary support for academic activities in the classroom, instructional services, and teacher training, recruitment, and retention. The budget includes \$146.4 million to operate and maintain BIE-funded schools and fully funds the estimated requirement for Tribal Grant Support costs to cover administrative costs for Tribes that choose to operate BIE-funded schools. The 2023 budget also features specific investments, including \$23.0 million to maintain support for distance learning and enhanced technology at BIE schools and \$4.0 million for Native language immersion programs.

The budget includes \$185.2 million for postsecondary schools and programs, an increase of \$20.7 million above 2022 enacted. This includes \$131.7 million for Haskell Indian Nations University and Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute, Tribal Colleges, Universities, and Technical Colleges and \$53.5 million for expanded Tribal scholarships and adult education programs.

Addressing BIE-funded school facilities that are in poor condition and deferred maintenance backlogs at more than 180 schools in the BIE school system continues to be a top priority for the Department. The 2023 budget includes \$420.1 million in annual funding for Education Construction, an increase of \$155.8 million above the 2022 enacted appropriation. An additional \$95.0 million in mandatory funding through the GAOA will also be available in 2023. The continued emphasis on BIE school infrastructure conditions has produced tangible results, with four new campuses opened to students in 2021 and another three schools to be completed in 2022. The 2023 requested increase will support planning, design, and construction for six BIE replacement school projects.

Addressing Climate Challenges and Building Resilience

Interior has unique responsibilities on behalf of our country to steward many of our lands, waters, and natural resources; provide essential scientific information about those resources; and uphold the Nation's commitments to American Indians and Alaska Natives. As such, Interior's programs inherently include a focus on the climate crisis. Similar to farmers, ranchers, community planners, and disaster preparedness professionals across the country, Interior land and resource managers are seeing climate-related changes on the ground and are working to address them. Worsening drought, increased weather risks, more extreme wildfires, profound threats to wildlife habitats, warming water temperatures, and new threats from invasive species are among the tangible challenges land and resource managers face right now.

The 2023 budget recognizes that Interior plays a crucial role in the whole-of-government approach to tackling climate change. The 2023 budget continues funding for the immediate challenges of the changing climate while laying the foundation to build America's resilience and promoting economic growth, creating good-paying jobs, and ensuring that 40 percent of the benefits of certain climate and clean energy investments accrue to disadvantaged communities.

Water Challenges

The effects of the current drought conditions in the West are severe and long lasting, and a full recovery will take years. The challenges these communities are facing now will likely continue through 2023. Drought analyses, combined with projections of future hydroclimate conditions, suggest that overall, drought severity and duration will increase across the West in the coming century. A growing risk to effective water management in the western United States is climate change. The BIL provides \$8.3 billion for the Bureau of Reclamation to invest over 5 years to build up America's ability to address pervasive drought conditions in the West. This work is underway with States, Tribes, and communities in the most drought-affected geographic areas to ensure predictable and sustainable water supplies.

Complementing this transformative investment, the 2023 budget before the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee includes \$1.4 billion for Reclamation programs and projects. This request supports a suite of water conservation, recycling, and planning programs to help communities mitigate drought and climate change impacts. The 2023 budget includes \$62.4 million for Reclamation's WaterSMART (Sustain and Manage America's Resources for Tomorrow) programs, which work cooperatively with States, Tribes, and local communities as they plan for and implement actions to increase water supply.

The Reclamation budget includes additional investments to support drought-impacted areas of the West. For example, \$11.5 million is requested for the Lower Colorado River Operations Program to implement drought contingency plans and response actions to maintain elevations at Lake Mead. Another \$2.0 million is requested for water infrastructure investments along the Texas border, and \$5.0 million of the request within the Central Valley Project in California is specific to drought planning and resiliency efforts that will be implemented in coordination with the California Department of Water Resources.

Wildland Fire Management

In the United States, on average, more than 62,000 wildfires burn 7.5 million acres every year. In 2021, Interior's wildfire managers saw that the intensity of fires increased earlier in the year and required elevated levels of fire preparedness for longer periods. The Nation remained at

Preparedness Level 4 or 5 for a record 99 consecutive days, requiring a significant commitment of firefighters and firefighting resources over an extended period. Communities and wildland firefighters across the West felt the devastating impacts of these changing fire patterns.

The 2023 budget request for the Wildland Fire Management (WFM) account is \$1.2 billion, an increase of \$173.5 million above the 2022 enacted appropriation. An additional \$340.0 million in wildfire suppression resources is available in the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund, as authorized by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (Public Law 115-141) to ensure the availability of sufficient funds above the appropriated amount for suppression in the event of a severe fire season.

The 2023 budget includes \$477.2 million for Preparedness, an increase of \$106.6 million above the 2022 enacted appropriation. This request will enable Interior to increase firefighting capacity, continue the transformation to a more permanent and professional wildland fire workforce, and support pay and compensation reforms, including the President's commitment that Federal firefighters are paid at least \$15 per hour. The budget proposes \$304.3 million for Fuels Management and \$20.5 million for Burned Area Rehabilitation. The budget request for Fuels Management will enable Interior to increase the pace and scale of fuel treatments by proactively addressing wildfire risk on Federal and Tribal lands and reducing carbon emissions. This discretionary request complements the \$218.6 million investment in Fuels Management and Burned Area Rehabilitation available through the BIL in 2023 to address the significant need for this work. The budget funds Suppression Operations at \$383.7 million, in accordance with Division O of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (Public Law 115-141).

Building Resilient Communities

Communities across the country are considering the changing climate not only as in the context of disaster preparedness but also as they plan long-term infrastructure and program investments. Interior programs support these efforts in a variety of ways. USGS manages the Groundwater and Streamflow Information Program, which maintains a nationwide network of streamflow and water-level information from more than 11,000 sites. The budget includes \$117.0 million for this program, an increase of \$6.4 million above the 2022 enacted appropriation. The information from the network is available online to help natural resource managers, scientists, and emergency managers across the country with monitoring for floods and drought and with forecasting water availability for natural resources and crops. The budget also includes \$60.9 million for the USGS Coastal and Marine Hazards and Resources Program, an increase of \$19.1 million above the 2022 enacted appropriation, to expand work providing information that informs long- and short-term planning and mitigation of the impacts of climate change to the Nation's coastlines.

The budget includes \$61.0 million for Interior's Tribal Climate Resilience program, an increase of \$32.0 million above the 2022 enacted level. This funding supports Tribes in climate resilience planning, assessment, and adaptation activities and planning and design work for Tribal communities evaluating the need for or pursuing climate-related relocation. The budget includes \$117.3 million for Assistance to Territories, which supports the Insular Areas through the provision of basic services as well as targeted investments related to climate change, including \$3.5 million for work related to coral reef ecosystems and other natural resource needs and \$15.5 million for clean energy projects and grid infrastructure improvements, an increase of \$4.5 million above the 2022 enacted appropriation.

The 2023 budget for USGS includes \$10.0 million to support a climate information portal. The portal would integrate climate-relevant Federal data, tools, and information to help Tribal, State, and local governments; communities; and commercial entities understand potential climate-related hazards and guide infrastructure investment decisions and other efforts to build resilience to extreme events equitably and inclusively. Entities could use this research enterprise portal to explore the potential impact of climate hazards among human populations, economies, and built and natural environments; assess vulnerability and risk and determine which risks require actions; evaluate and evolve building standards and designs to help ensure that new infrastructure and capital improvement projects are climate resilient; and prepare climate impact assessments.

Resource Stewardship

The 2023 budget includes increases to strengthen natural resource management across the Department to improve the resilience of Tribal lands and the lands Interior manages. The 2023 budget includes \$4.9 billion across Interior to support the restoration, conservation, and improvements needed for healthier lands, waters, and ecosystems and their resident species. Healthier lands are more resilient to the effects of the changing climate, and investments that are made now will help ensure the unique and spectacular lands and resources Interior manages endure for future generations.

The 2023 budget proposes significant increases in the Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the National Park Service for resource stewardship programs which are at the heart of Interior's mission. The budget includes \$553.0 million for resource stewardship programs in the National Park Service, an increase of \$170.9 million from the 2022 enacted appropriation. This additional funding will help to build capacity within the national parks to address natural resource challenges, expand youth and job program partnerships through the Civilian Climate Corps to restore national park resources, and invest in inventorying and monitoring to support proper stewardship of park ecosystems and species.

Across Interior, the 2023 budget includes \$174.2 million to address invasive species, including targeted early detection and rapid response efforts. Invasive plants and animals outcompete native species, disrupt ecosystem function and deplete resources, exacerbate hazards such as fire and landslides, damage infrastructure, and spread wildlife and human disease. In addition, the Administration supports congressional efforts to amend Title 18 of the Lacey Act to return the longstanding authority of FWS to prohibit interstate transport of injurious species. Recent incidences of injurious species, such as invasive mussels contaminating commercial products, demonstrate the need to restore this authority.

The America the Beautiful Initiative

Interior plays a critical role in helping the Administration's America the Beautiful initiative meet the President's ambitious goal to work with States, Tribes, Territories, private landowners, local communities, and other partners to conserve 30 percent of U.S. lands and waters by 2030 to help address the climate crisis and its impacts on nature. This initiative will help strengthen the economy, address the interconnected climate and biodiversity crises, and advance environmental justice and people's access to nature.

The America the Beautiful initiative features partnerships like the recently launched Task Force on Collaborative Conservation which includes Interior, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and

the Western Governors Association. The Task Force will work to enhance collaboration across Federal, State, and local jurisdictions to support cross-boundary coordination on issues such as wildfire mitigation, invasive species control, and habitat restoration, and support the voluntary stewardship efforts of ranchers, farmers, and other private landowners to keep working lands working.

Building on the conservation efforts of the previous Administration, Interior is working to further the goals of Secretary's Order 3362 to enhance migration corridors and winter range for elk, mule deer, and pronghorns in the West; this work includes a grant program, administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, for projects that improve big game habitat through voluntary efforts on private and Tribal lands.

In 2023, America the Beautiful builds on these efforts and other broadly supported actions to advance land and water conservation in a manner that is locally led, is guided by science, honors Tribal trust and sovereignty, and is respectful of landowners. The implementation of this initiative continues to rely on broad engagement, including that of hunters, anglers, outdoor enthusiasts, private landowners, Tribal Nations, States, territories, and local officials. These important partners and stakeholders drive the strategies that reflect the priorities of all communities.

In 2023, through the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, NPS will provide free, on-location help to communities working to create and restore parks and conservation areas. Completed projects have helped restore rivers, wildlife habitat, and impaired resources and have improved outdoor recreation opportunities to meet changing demands. Through Tribal Climate Adaptation Grants, BIA supports Tribes and Tribal organizations with planning, capacity building, and actions to address climate risks. With climate change disproportionately affecting the Arctic and northern areas of the United States, the program's planning and data development awards alone are estimated to benefit more than 440,000 Alaska Native people.

The 2023 budget invests across the Department to support partnerships that encourage conservation. For example, FWS includes funding to broaden support for habitat restoration on private lands that are located along migration corridors and waterways through Candidate Conservation Agreements with partners. The budget includes \$20.4 million for the Candidate Conservation program and \$67.4 million for the FWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife program, which assists private landowners who are interested in restoring and enhancing wildlife habitat on their lands.

Creating Jobs to Meet Environmental and Energy Challenges

Interior programs supported an estimated 1.9 million jobs in the U.S. economy in 2019, according to the most recent Department of the Interior Economic Contributions Report. Those jobs were driven primarily by Interior's work in the areas of energy and minerals, recreation and tourism, irrigation and other water-related activities, and grants and payments.

Interior's 2023 budget continues these core activities and includes additional investments that complement funding made available through the GAOA and the BIL, which are targeted to boost economic and job growth. The President's Budget proposes growth in areas that position the country to be more competitive in the changing economy and environment.

Clean Energy Jobs of the Future

Interior is working hard to meet the President's ambitious goal to deploy 30 gigawatts (GW; 30,000 megawatts [MW]) of offshore wind energy by 2030 to fight climate change and create nearly 80,000 jobs. To provide context for the Administration's ambitious wind energy goal, earlier this year, I commemorated the groundbreaking of the second commercial-scale offshore energy project approved for Federal waters, which will have the capacity to generate 130 MW of wind energy—enough to power more than 70,000 homes and businesses. The South Fork wind energy project will be located offshore Rhode Island and New York. In addition, nine additional project reviews were initiated in the first year of the Biden-Harris Administration.

As of February 2022, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) oversees 18 active commercial wind energy leases in the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). If fully developed, these 18 leases could support approximately 27 GW of power to supply nearly 9.5 million homes. BOEM held the New York Bight offshore wind sale on February 23, 2022, offering six lease areas covering more than 488,000 acres for potential wind energy development. The sale resulted in winning bids from six companies totaling \$4.37 billion, which was the Nation's highest grossing competitive offshore energy lease sale in history, including oil and gas lease sales. BOEM recently announced a wind energy auction for two lease sales offshore the Carolinas later this May.

The Administration is also preparing for lease sales offshore California in 2022 and is actively working with States, Tribes, ocean users, and key stakeholders to plan sales in the Gulf of Mexico and offshore the U.S. Central Atlantic coast in 2023. Additional planning is underway for potential lease areas offshore Oregon and Hawaii and in the Gulf of Maine. The 2023 budget includes \$51.7 million for BOEM's Renewable Energy programs and \$7.7 million for the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) to establish an offshore renewable energy inspection and regulation program. Compared to the 2022 enacted appropriation, the 2023 request for these two programs combined is an increase of \$18.6 million.

Onshore, the Administration's clean energy goal is to permit 25 GW of renewable energy by 2025, as required by the Energy Act of 2020. Interior plays a central role in achieving this goal by carrying out environmental reviews for clean energy projects on our Nation's public lands, conducting meaningful consultations with Tribal Nations, and assessing potential impacts to species. To help achieve this goal, the 2023 budget includes \$49.7 million for BLM's Renewable Energy program, an increase of \$18.7 million above the 2022 enacted appropriation, to expand the number of Renewable Energy Coordination Offices which specialize in permitting for renewable energy projects on public lands. To further improve coordination across the Government, Interior has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, and Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency to streamline clean energy reviews. The BLM Resource Management Planning program also includes \$11.0 million to support the siting of renewable energy projects on public lands.

BLM has prioritized and is actively processing dozens of large-scale renewable energy projects and transmission lines; as of March 2022, the bureau is working to complete the environmental review and permitting for 60 utility-scale onshore clean energy projects proposed on public lands. This effort includes 45 solar projects, 4 wind projects, 5 geothermal projects, and 6 interconnecting gen-tie lines that are vital to the feasibility of clean energy projects proposed on non-Federal lands. Combined, the 60 projects have the potential capacity to add more than

30,000 MW of renewable energy to the western electric grid. BLM also has approximately 60 applications that are still under initial or preliminary review, and the bureau has been receiving additional wind and solar applications weekly.

To facilitate the development of geothermal projects, the request includes \$3.6 million for USGS to characterize and assess domestic geothermal energy resources and work with partners to advance technologies to utilize those resources. Geothermal resources are a significant source of renewable electric power in the western United States and, with recent advances in technology, are becoming a potential source of a large fraction of baseload electric power.

To further support the achievement of clean energy goals, the Administration is working to accelerate the transition of Federal fleet of vehicles to 100 percent zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs). By leveraging the buying power of the Federal Government and transforming its fleet of more than 600,000 cars and trucks to an all-electric fleet, the Administration aims to accelerate America's industrial capacity to supply domestically produced ZEVs and electric batteries to create new good-paying jobs and address the climate crisis.

Interior's fleet includes approximately 30,800 vehicles located across the country. Interior owns 70 percent of the vehicles, 80 percent of which are light- to medium-duty trucks, vans, and sport utility vehicles. The 2023 budget includes \$61.9 million to accelerate the transition of Interior's fleet to ZEVs. Funding will support either acquiring ZEVs within the owned fleet or transitioning to the General Services Administration's leased fleet, investing in the related charging infrastructure, and making plans and integrating those plans to effectively support the initiative.

Balancing the Nation's Energy Portfolio

The 2023 budget includes \$476.6 million for oil and gas programs in BSEE, BOEM, and BLM, an increase of \$63.7 million above the 2022 enacted appropriation. The budget for BSEE includes \$246.1 million for safety and environmental stewardship programs. The budget for BOEM provides \$63.6 million for conventional energy programs to support OCS planning, leasing, and oversight, including inventorying oil and gas reserves, overseeing ongoing activities, ensuring adequate financial assurances for decommissioning liability and risk management, developing and implementing the National OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program (National OCS Program), reviewing and administering oil and gas exploration and development plans as well as geological and geophysical permitting, and conducting economic analyses and resource evaluations.

As required by section 18 of the OCS Lands Act, BOEM prepares the National OCS Program, which sets the schedule for proposed offshore oil and gas lease sales over a 5-year period. The National OCS Program is designed in a manner to best meet the Nation's energy needs while carefully considering factors to balance the potential for accessing oil and gas resources with the potential for adverse impacts from such activities.

The 2023 budget includes \$166.8 million for BLM's Oil and Gas Management program, including \$51.0 million for inspection activities to be offset by an onshore inspection fee. The 2023 budget proposes to offset the cost of BLM's Oil and Gas Inspection Activities program from appropriations to revenue from a new inspection fee. In addition to administering oil and gas leasing and ensuring environmentally responsible development, the budget request will allow BLM to remediate legacy well sites in the National Petroleum Reserve—Alaska.

Reclamation Jobs in Energy Communities

The BIL provides nearly \$16.0 billion, mostly for States and Tribes, to reclaim abandoned coal mine lands and orphaned oil and gas wells across the country. Both important investments will support needed jobs, address environmental hazards and risks, and restore lands for other uses.

The 2023 budget includes related—but not duplicative—funding to address reclamation needs not addressed through the BIL. The budget includes \$65.0 million in the Energy Community Revitalization Program for abandoned hardrock or non-coal mine reclamation, which was authorized but not funded in the BIL. States and the Interstate Mining Compact Commission have indicated that abandoned hardrock mines can be found across the country, and many States do not have good inventories or strong programs to manage those sites. Interior has identified thousands of mines and features on its lands that pose safety risks and generate environmental contaminants. The 2023 program will include \$33.0 million for assistance and support to States, \$10.0 million for reclamation work on Tribal lands, and \$17.0 million to address reclamation and restoration on Interior lands.

BLM has estimated that more than 51,000 abandoned hardrock mines are on BLM lands, and of that number, 10 percent have environmental impacts and 95 percent pose physical safety risks. In recognition of the 150th anniversary of the Mining Law of 1872, the Department has established an Interagency Working Group to comprehensively review hardrock mine permitting and oversight on Federal lands to help ensure that mining operations adhere to strong social, environmental, and labor standards. As part of this whole-of-government effort, the Department will host extensive public input and comment sessions on potential hardrock mining reforms.

To address the volume and complexity of abandoned hardrock mines on BLM lands, the 2023 budget includes \$62.2 million for Abandoned Mine Lands (AMLs) and Hazardous Materials Management.

The budget for the Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation Enforcement (OSMRE) includes \$115.0 million for AML Economic Revitalization grants. This funding allows coal communities in States and Tribes with the greatest amount of unfunded AML problems to leverage mine land reclamation with local economic development.

Infrastructure

Interior manages an infrastructure portfolio valued at more than \$400.0 billion, which captures a variety of structures, including dams, storage buildings, and national icons. The Department is responsible for roughly 43,000 buildings, 100,000 miles of road, and 83,000 structures. Interior's funding focuses significantly on the operations, maintenance, renewal, and modernization of infrastructure, which directly helps create jobs and benefit local economies.

The 2023 budget includes more than \$2.8 billion to address the Department's infrastructure operations, maintenance, renewal, and modernization needs. Interior's annual request for infrastructure funding is in addition to the estimated \$1.6 billion in mandatory funding that is available to Interior each year through 2025 through the Legacy Restoration Fund included in the GAOA. These funds are available to address the Department's deferred maintenance backlog in NPS, FWS, BLM, and BIE schools. The U.S. Forest Service also receives up to \$285 million in LRF funding each year.

At the end of 2022, Interior's LRF program will have initiated 228 projects touching all 50 States; Washington, DC; Puerto Rico; and the U.S. Virgin Islands. When completed, these

projects are estimated to address \$2.2 billion of Interior’s deferred maintenance backlog, create an average of 18,000 jobs each year, and contribute an average of \$1.9 billion each year to the overall gross domestic product.

The 2023 budget request reflects a change the National Park Service began in 2022 to transform its facilities condition assessment process. This transformation will provide a more streamlined, comprehensive, consistent, and timely identification of estimated repair needs to maintain the NPS asset portfolio, including how it reports deferred maintenance and repair (DM&R). The new approach reduces the burden on parks and supports a more operationally useful assessment of the condition of and estimated deferred maintenance requirements for the NPS asset portfolio. This approach will improve the allocation of NPS infrastructure investments. NPS will calculate DM&R needs for its assets using three components: parametric condition assessments, a commonly used tool, for industry-standard assets; Federal Highway Administration assessments for transportation assets; and work orders for most other assets.

As NPS implements its process, Interior’s other bureaus are exploring the lessons learned to improve their infrastructure investment processes. Historically, attention has focused on Interior’s DM&R backlog as a proxy for infrastructure investment requirements, but mission fulfillment requirements also include operations, other maintenance, renewal, and modernization. This shift is part of an ongoing effort to manage Interior’s assets to better direct limited resources to address more critical maintenance, renewal, or modernization needs. This approach aligns with Interior’s longstanding investment criteria for asset management programs, which consider facility condition as merely one factor to ensure that assets can capably deliver mission requirements or other benefits.

Balancing Development and Conservation

Interior also plays a critical role in balancing conservation and the development needed for vibrant communities with strong economies. The 2023 budget includes \$152.8 million for the FWS Ecological Services Planning and Consultation program to support reviews and permitting of clean energy and other infrastructure and development projects. These investments will help facilitate consultation and permitting required under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), including for ESA consultations required to implement the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. FWS works collaboratively with industry, agencies, Tribes, and other stakeholders to provide technical assistance that informs project development to help avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts on wildlife and habitats. The budget also includes \$12.3 million for the FWS Migratory Bird Management program to conduct activities to support development while protecting migratory birds, notably iconic bald and golden eagles. These investments in the Migratory Bird Management program will help modernize Interior’s permitting process to access the latest scientific and energy technology information when evaluating development proposals.

Civilian Climate Corps

The Civilian Climate Corps (CCC) is an important Administration initiative that draws on America’s strength to work together to revitalize public lands, waters, infrastructure, and communities—and, in doing so, create jobs. This initiative expands the Department’s longstanding partnership, apprenticeship, and youth engagement programs to restore Interior’s lands and waters, improve access to outdoor recreation, increase reforestation, and inventory cultural heritage and paleontology sites, among other activities. These programs provide job opportunities and experience, teach skills, provide a pathway to employment, contribute to the

resilience of unique lands and resources, and reflect the diversity of America. The 2023 budget includes \$60.0 million to expand these programs, provide program participants with a living wage, and put more people to work restoring public lands.

BIA has also established the Indian Youth Service Corps to conserve and protect Indigenous people's natural and cultural resources through maintenance, research, resilience, and mitigation. Program activities align Indigenous traditional cultural values with projects that provide sustainable benefits for program participants and Tribal communities. The program expands BIA's Pathways Internship Program, which targets American Indian and Alaska Native students for internships across seven BIA programs and complements the BIA CCC program.

Advancing and Incorporating Science Across Interior

Science is integral to the accomplishment of Interior's core mission activities. The 2023 budget includes more than \$1.4 billion for research and development programs across the Department, but the application of science is also essential in carrying out direct mission activities. FWS has integrated scientific information to help improve and streamline the environmental review process for Federal projects. The Consultation Package Builder leads agencies through development of biological assessments, and plans are in place to expand available data of species and their locations.

Interior's natural resource managers rely on science every day as they gather, analyze, and apply inventorying and monitoring data to inform stewardship decisions. The ability to examine data regarding the status of lands, waters, ecosystems, and the resident species plays an increasingly important role in understanding and building resilience to the effects of climate change. The 2023 budget includes funding to support adaptive management and applied science within the operating accounts of BLM, FWS, and NPS.

USGS is Interior's primary science organization, providing science and actionable information about natural hazards, natural resources, ecosystems and environmental health, mapping and land imaging, and the effects of climate change. The 2023 budget includes \$147.1 million for applied science in species management and land management, directly supporting the work of Interior bureaus. USGS also supports a network of Climate Adaptation Science Centers (CASCs), which promote scientific collaboration to tackle regional climate science challenges. The budget includes \$124.7 million for this work, which helps provide resource managers with the ability to integrate the best available science into everyday resource management. The newest CASC, hosted at the University of Minnesota's Institute on the Environment, will pay special attention to Tribal concerns and build off the unique and robust experience of Midwest Tribes with adaptation science and practice.

USGS science plays an important role in addressing significant challenges that have substantial societal and environmental impacts. Frequently, USGS science is paired with resource management expertise in Interior bureaus as well as with other Federal and non-Federal partners. An example of this collaboration is USGS' role in ongoing governmentwide work to address the problem of invasive carp. USGS research in this area supports early detection, risk assessment, and development and assessment of tools to control the number of invasive carp. Removal efforts using a USGS-developed method in Barkley Lake, KY, removed tens of thousands of pounds of invasive silver and bighead carp. Research testing on the effectiveness of an acoustic deterrent system at Lock and Dam 19 on the Mississippi River will support efforts to stop the upstream expansion of invasive carp. Research on other deterrents, such as carbon dioxide, have

proven effective against grass carp in laboratory tests. The 2023 budget includes \$47.9 million to continue research on biological threats and invasive species, an increase of \$7.5 million from the 2022 enacted appropriation.

Promoting Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion of Underserved Communities

The Administration is adopting a whole-of-government approach to advance equity, civil rights, racial justice, and equal opportunity. The Interior 2023 budget request supports the actions needed to recognize and redress inequities and to proactively advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility within the Department's workforce.

Strengthening Interior's Commitment to Diversity and Equity

The 2023 budget includes \$16.8 million as part of a Departmentwide Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility initiative. Funding will be used to increase capacity in the bureaus and in the Department's Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Civil Rights; Office of Human Capital; and Office of Collaborative Alternative Dispute Resolution to:

- Improve Interior's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) adjudication, investigations, and processing of final Department decisions and increase EEO training across the Department;
- Expand capacity for alternative dispute resolution and EEO complaint mediation;
- Assess hiring programs to eliminate barriers to effective and inclusive recruitment; and
- Ensure consistent and equal pay for equal work.

In February 2022, I established the first-ever Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Council to prioritize equity and inclusion and to incorporate best practices into the Department's work across its many bureaus, programs, and services. The budget includes additional specific investments to expand the Office of Diversity within FWS and to establish an Office of Equity and Inclusion within BOEM.

For far too long, environmental policy decisions have failed to adequately account for environmental injustice, including the disproportionate, disparate, and cumulative impacts pollution and climate change have on low-income communities and communities of color. To address those inequities, the Administration is working to implement the Justice40 initiative to ensure that 40 percent of overall benefits of certain Federal investments in climate and clean energy are directed to disadvantaged communities. Interior bureaus and offices have been working as part of governmentwide efforts to refine the criteria and metrics needed to implement this important initiative. The 2023 budget includes \$4.0 million for dedicated staff and technical support to provide programmatic expertise, coordination, and outreach support across the Department. These additional resources will enable the Department to implement the Justice40 initiative while quantifying the benefits and positive impacts of Justice40-covered programs on disadvantaged communities across the country.

Building a More Inclusive Agency

Interior is also working to make our mission programs and services more inclusive of diverse and underserved communities. The 2023 budget includes targeted investments to better connect with and be more responsive to new audiences. Examples of this effort in the budget include the following:

- The Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration program includes \$8.1 million to better address environmental justice issues.
- USGS includes \$800,000 to enhance scientific capacity partnerships through technical training internships with Tribes, Alaska Native communities, and underserved communities.
- FWS includes \$4.0 million for an expanded Native American Programs Coordination Office.
- NPS includes \$5.7 million to establish an Office of Native American Affairs and support Tribal liaisons at national parks to strengthen partnerships and improve coordination with Tribal Nations and support the Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience (NATIVE) Act.

The 2023 budget also expands ongoing programs that are working to connect new audiences to the outdoors and to Interior's mission activities. For example, the FWS budget includes \$12.5 million for its Urban Wildlife Conservation program. This program leverages the 101 national wildlife refuges that are within 25 miles of an urban area through local partnerships. The program helps to connect the refuges to their local communities through outreach and programming, creating opportunities for the 80 percent of Americans who are living in urban areas to benefit from time spent in nature.

The NPS mission includes the preservation of America's cultural and historical resources. Including the cultural practices and history from across America in carrying out this mission is an important responsibility. The 2023 budget includes several important investments that reflect inclusion and diversity:

- Support for the African American Civil Rights Network to present a comprehensive narrative of the people, places, and events associated with the African American Civil Rights movement—\$5.4 million.
- Historic Preservation Fund support for Historically Black Colleges and Universities—\$10.0 million.
- Grants to Indian Tribes to support Tribal historic preservation offices that preserve the distinct cultural heritage of American Indian Tribes nationwide—\$23.0 million.
- Competitive historic preservation grants to support State and local efforts to preserve sites that document the struggle for equal opportunity for African Americans—\$21.8 million.
- Transfer of \$3.3 million to the 400 Years of African American History Commission for research and programs throughout the United States to recognize and highlight the resilience and cultural contributions of Africans and African Americans over 400 years.
- Expanded capacity at more than 30 national park units that preserve and tell the story of historically underrepresented and marginalized groups or conduct programs that reach out to local underserved communities.
- Assessment and addressing of transportation barriers to National Park System units from underserved communities—\$5.0 million.

- Establishment of the Park Accessibility for Visitors and Employees Network—\$5.0 million.

Building Agency Capacity

Interior is working to strengthen the Department moving forward and continuously improve the delivery of our mission programs and services to the American people. Efforts related to improving Interior’s workforce and operations and better leveraging technology and information are underway across the Department.

Workforce and Operational Improvements

Interior’s mission activities rely on a talented and dedicated workforce, and many bureau operations are labor intensive and complex. At the end of 2020, however, Interior’s staffing was at a 10-year low, with 60,558 full-time equivalents (FTEs). Despite the pandemic, by the end of 2021, staffing had increased to 62,027 FTEs. When fully enacted, the Department’s 2023 budget would support 68,133 FTEs.

As the Department rebuilds its workforce, Interior is working to recruit, hire, and train the next generation of talented people who will reflect the diversity and strength of the United States. Complementing our diverse workforce, the Department is committed to providing the tools critical for success across Interior. DOI will regularly conduct equity assessments and pursue more meaningful engagement with underserved communities to make sure they are visible and considered during outreach and hiring efforts. The budget includes \$2.3 million for Human Capital initiatives, which include the use of Talent Teams to strengthen recruitment and improve outreach to diverse candidates.

With regard to the Wildland Fire Management workforce, Interior is working closely with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, and the Office of Personnel Management to ensure that Federal wildland firefighters receive pay that is competitive with the pay received by other firefighters. The 2023 budget continues to support a transition to a more permanent wildland fire workforce, with improved training and career development opportunities to encourage the retention of experienced and skilled staff members.

To better support Interior’s uniformed law enforcement efforts, the 2023 budget includes \$21.1 million to ensure that Interior law enforcement personnel have body-worn cameras and the associated data storage capability they need. The 2023 budget proposal would provide coverage for all Interior law enforcement officers.

The Department continues its work to strengthen BLM’s workforce, which experienced a significant loss of expertise during the 2019 reorganization of the bureau, when the BLM headquarters was moved from the Washington, DC, area to Grand Junction, CO. At that time, more than 80 percent of the employees in positions identified for relocation chose not to relocate, and many employees moved to positions outside BLM and Interior. BLM is working now with employees to rebuild a headquarters in Washington, DC, and to fully leverage the strengths of the western headquarters in Grand Junction, CO, and in BLM field offices across the West.

Leveraging Technology and Information

As part of a governmentwide initiative, the Department is working to incorporate a stronger analysis process through evidence-based program evaluations that rely on data. To improve data-management practices, the budget invests \$2.3 million to increase transparency by

establishing a robust data-management program, organizing data through an enterprise data registry. The budget also includes \$4.3 million for an independent evaluation fund to support efforts to conduct independent evaluations of programs, initiatives, and processes across Interior. DOI will also develop and implement a Departmentwide Enterprise Risk Management program to better identify and address systemic risks across the agency. The 2023 budget includes an additional \$700,000 to support evidence-based evaluations and risk-management work across the Department.

To better support this data-driven work, the 2023 budget includes \$54.3 million to continue to modernize and enhance the Department's enterprise business management system, the Financial and Business Management System (FBMS). FBMS supports the administrative system's requirements across the Department for core accounting, budget execution, acquisition, aspects of financial assistance, real and personal property management, fleet management, travel integration, enterprise information management, and reporting.

In 2023, the Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR) will invest \$17.5 million for the next phase of its ongoing Information Technology (IT) Modernization effort, which will focus on the design, development, and implementation of the new system and the eventual decommissioning of the legacy financial system. ONRR ensures that revenue from Federal and Indian mineral leases is effectively, efficiently, and accurately collected, accounted for, analyzed, audited, and disbursed to recipients in a timely fashion. Revenue distributions, which totaled \$8.8 billion in 2021, benefit States, Tribes, individual Indian mineral royalty owners, and U.S. Treasury accounts. IT Modernization will provide the capacity, flexibility, and agility to reduce long-term operations and maintenance costs, and it will strengthen the cybersecurity of Federal networks and critical infrastructure.

In the area of law enforcement, the 2023 budget includes \$11.0 million to implement a unified Law Enforcement Records Management System (LERMS). With LERMS, Interior will be able to centralize law enforcement activities—including criminal investigations, jail management, and citation tracking—and securely transmit law enforcement records across the Department and other law enforcement agencies and courts. At present, data sharing between the two legacy law enforcement systems is limited, and systems are inaccessible in rural areas, such as at national parks that do not have cell service or the internet and require officers to reenter handwritten paper ticket and report information at a computing device when a connection becomes available. The current systems do not have the capability to electronically transfer ticket information to the U.S. Courts or report mandatory data to the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). By transitioning to a unified LERMS, the realized efficiencies and increased capabilities will allow DOI law enforcement officers to spend more time protecting people and resources and will promote accountability.

Interior bureaus and offices use field communications to carry out critical operations, including law enforcement, wildland firefighting, land and resource management, scientific studies, and emergency management. The 2023 request includes \$28.6 million to be distributed across BIA, NPS, FWS, USGS, and the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) to modernize field communications. This DOI Field Communications Modernization investment is part of a strategy to address needed upgrades in Interior's field communications systems to ensure more efficient and reliable voice communication and remote broadband connectivity to provide employees working in the field with voice, video, and data capabilities for all missions. In many locations, this deployment will enhance or replace voice-only, mid-20th-century land mobile

radio technology with technology that is cheaper to operate and maintain. Operations and maintenance costs may be significantly reduced and communications capabilities will likely increase by assessing current capabilities and needs, leveraging current technological solutions, and seeking to deliver more cost-effective cellular and satellite services.

Interior is also investing in cybersecurity to ensure that the security and integrity of our systems are not compromised. In January 2022, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, FBI, and National Security Agency encouraged all agencies to increase cyber resilience in light of elevated risk. Interior continues to pivot to keep pace with a dynamic cybersecurity environment and deploy needed mitigation tools and upgraded capabilities. The 2023 budget includes \$44.3 million to address high-priority cyber defense requirements, better detect emerging threats, make needed improvements to Interior's IT networks, initiate supply chain risk management analysis, and maintain ongoing operations.

Conclusion

The 2023 President's Budget for Interior sets ambitious goals, but they are achievable. Working together, we have the opportunity to invest now to strengthen our Nation for all Americans, protect our environment, and ensure our future generations continue to not only enjoy, but improve our way of life. I look forward to doing this work together. Thank you again for having me, and I am pleased to answer any questions you may have.